

dogmatic and drives his points well home—they are worth remembering. He has a curious faculty of seeing the whole of a subject, and then being diverted to one aspect. It is this, I think, which gives the feminine vein which is sometimes apparent in his writings. The style ever a joy, is here at its best.

D. S. E.

The True Path. Ruskin.

In this work Ruskin has proved without doubt that he was a true artist, a born artist in feeling, though his artistic imagination found no vent in pictures but in writings. His advice to the working men of Manchester and Bradford may have been inspiring and ennobling but was surely rather above their heads. The lecture on "The Work of Iron" is intensely interesting. Never before had I realized how much of the beauty of Nature is owing to iron. What an intense dislike Ruskin shows for iron railways! His paragraph on the good labourer who does everything he ought is a piece of most perfect sarcasm. Yet quite true, for Ruskin is right, too much is expected from the poor.

E. C. L.

Obita Dicta. Birrell.

Delightful volumes in wit, their literary acumen, and the charm of the mind they reveal. There is such an absence of opinionativeness and such a kindly atmosphere in them, that even where he may think some literary fetish of his own, underrated by the author, he need not resent it. Neither, one thinks, would the writer criticise! Mr. Birrell's shafts of wit and gentle laughter must surely be as good as most men's praise.

L. S. D.

Obita Dicta. Birrell.

The title of this book and the tone in which it is written are ludicrously at variance. *Obiter Dicta* (gratuitous opinion) stalks abroad with head erect, and a self-assertiveness which borders on the tyrannical. The first volume is superior to the second, as being much more interesting in matter as well as more racy in manner, but the style throughout is very brilliant, racy, and original. Like all literary critics Mr. Birrell, of course, has his likes and dislikes, but his trick of comparing one writer with another, in order that by black-washing his non-favourite, his favourite may appear all the whiter, is detestable and contrary to all canons of criticism.

B. B.

THE SEASIDE IN SUMMER.

NATURE NOTES.

"Oh what an endless work have I in hand,
To count the sea's abundant progeny!
Whose fruitfuller seed far passeth those on land,
And also those which woune in the azure sky!"

So Spenser wrote long ago, and many who have not the poet's powers of expression have also felt, when on a visit to the seaside, that the myriads of objects clinging so abundantly on the rocks or cast so lavishly on the shore defied all attempts not only to enumerate but even to classify them. The aspiring conchologist or marine botanist may be encouraged by the thought that the veriest tyro has a good chance, if he uses his eyes, of discovering some new example of animal or vegetable life at the seaside.

However carefully any portion of cliffs may have been examined, the frequent fracture and constant wearing of the surface leave fresh parts yet unstudied, and of whatever geological formation our cliffs may be they contain hidden objects of great interest. But this is not all. There is an outward beauty conferred on them too. Many cliffs and coasts are rich in soft grasses and luxuriant flowers. Some of them indeed are found nowhere save on the sea coast. Such a plant is the Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*) whose green tufts hang high up on several of our seaside cliffs. It may be recognized by its clumps of sea-green foliage, varied in August by clusters of little pale yellow flowers. The tallest stalks are usually about a foot in length and it is a member of the *Umbelliferae*.

Hanging like tresses down the rocky sides we may often see the green trailing stalks of that little plant the Sea Spurrey Sandwort (*Arenaria marina*). It is very succulent, its stems about as thick as twine, its leaves of semi-cylindrical form, as sharp pointed as a needle. Small, reddish, lilac, star-shaped flowers grow here and there between the leaf and

stem, and when the blossom is over seed vessels hang down on the flower stalks. It grows also on the sandy shore and among the pebbles of the beach.

On sand or soil may be gathered the Prickly Saltwort or Sea Grape (*Salsola Rali*) with its prostrate angular stems, bearing a single flower of pale greenish hue with three little bracts at the base. In July and August the Thrift, often called Sea Pink or Sea Gilli-flower, is recognized by everybody.

The Cliff Cabbage (*Brassica Oleraceæ*) will have ceased to show its pale yellow flowers with the month of June, but its leaves may still be recognized with their sea green bloom upon them. The Seaside Poppy (*Glaucium luteum*), or Horned Poppy as it is sometimes called because of its long seed vessels, is also well known. This flower is as large as the poppy of the cornfield and as shining in its gold as is that flower in its scarlet. A large mass of leaves of most beautiful sea green tint grow around the root, the upper ones clasping the stem, and the lower leaves having so many prickles on them that when glittering with dew they seem as if silver were sprinkled there.

Some very pretty trefoils flourish exceedingly well on our sea-beaches, and tufts of Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*) help to bind the stones together. Starry Sea Camomile, with its cream coloured rays surrounding a yellow centre, gives its strong scent to the wind. It must be distinguished from the Sea Severfew (*Pyrethrum maritimum*) which grows all over the cliffs and shingle.

The Sea-holly (*Eryngium maritimum*) with its large veined prickly leaf so like a holly leaf that any one may know it. It has the bluish tint on the green of its leaves and flowers that is so characteristic of seaside flowers.

But we must leave many seaside flowers unmentioned and go on to some shells that we or the children may probably find. If we notice holes under the mud or wet sand close to the sea we may be on the way to discover some of the numerous species of the "gaper tribe." They are oblong shells and somewhat rude in appearance, always more or less gaping very widely at the two extremities; both the shell and the animal within are often covered with a coarse wrinkled thin skin. The species all bury themselves in sand, mud, or gravel. They have long siphons or tubes, and when buried

they remain in an erect position under the mud so that the holes correspond with the extremities of their tubes.

The Razor fishes are remarkable for their long narrow shells which might remind us of a pod of a bean. The Pod Razor shell is a long shell covered with a thin skin of a light brown or olive green, which when rubbed off shows the shell to be white with a few bands of dull purple. The Sabre Razor shell is curved and more slender. It also inhabits deeper water.

Every sea teams with some of the numerous species of Scallop. One of the most highly coloured of our own common kinds is the Tiger Scallop which is streaked with every variety of markings of brownish red, lilac, chocolate, yellow and white. Three species of Limpet may be found: the Common Limpet, which is nearly round or conical and usually an olive or yellowish colour; another species is called the Horse Limpet; a beautiful little kind is also common in the long leaf of the tangle of the seaweed, which is clear and thin, of dark olive, rayed with brilliant blue—it is the Pellucid Limpet.

Few shells are more similar to those of our land snails in form than is the pretty glossy brown species called the Sea Snail. It is very abundant on our sandy shores. The False Wentletrap, a very long spiral shell of a whitish colour and thickly ribbed, is another frequent species. Then there are parasitic shellfish which infest living animals. One of these, the Styliifer, is among mollusca what the Ichneumon is among insects—dwelling within the fleshy substance of the Starfish almost hidden from sight, but, like the parasitic insect, avoiding the vital parts of its victim. It is never found except in the Rays, and it looks like a little glass bubble.

There is a shell found on most of our shores, though not in great numbers except on some parts of the Southern coast, which is called the Torquay Nightcap. It is shaped like a little cap of liberty. Then there are Keyhole Limpets, so called on account of an oblong aperture at their summit shaped like a keyhole. The Toothed Dentalium is one of the commonest tooth shells. It is like a horn, slightly curved and hollow, of white or yellowish colour, about an inch and a half long.

I once found on the beach at Hastings a little worm-like creature with many feet and of the most brilliant iridescent

colours. I was eight years old then but I have never forgotten my surprise and delight at the discovery. Yet the Sea Mouse, for so it is called, is not very uncommon, but it is wont to hide among the weeds and under the sides of rocks and so is seldom seen. By a little turning over of the weeds it may be discovered. It is about six to eight inches in length and has a plated back. The plates are covered by a filmy substance resembling tow and it has flexible bristles radiating glorious sheeny colours. Sea Hedgehog, or Sea Porcupine, would suit it better than its real name, but if we want to classify it scientifically we should place it not certainly with the mouse but with the earth-worm, for it is one of the *Annelides*, that is, having rings. In this class also we have the *Serpula*, which makes so strange a dwelling place for itself, and the *Terebellæ*, whose dwelling places are even prettier objects because they are more thickly studded with pieces of shells mingled with the sand and making by their form and colour quite a piece of mosaic work.

The largest of our common marine plants is the Knobbed Fucus (*Fucus nodosus*) with its thick leathery stems sometimes several feet long and its air vessels or bladder-floats. Commoner still is the Bladder Wrack (*Fucus vesiculosus*) with bladders in its very substance and a strongly marked ridge running through its midst. Then there is the Serrated Fucus whose brown spray contains no bladders and which may be known by its saw-like edges.

The common Sea Belt or Sea Girdle is like a long narrow leaf with a curled margin fastened to a very thick stem and ending in a cluster of very strong fibres. The Sea Belt is the sea-weed that some people hang up as a barometer. It is one of the Oarweeds (*Laminaria*). Another is the Bulbous Oarweed sometimes called Furbelows. It is a long broad leaf cut into several segments which stream in the waters. It has a flat stem which has one twist in it and a waved margin, which latter gives it its second name of Furbelows. Sea-weeds may be conveniently classed into three great classes—the blue-brown, or olive-green, the grass-green, and the red. The first kind are the largest and grow at about half-tide level. *Fucus* and *Laminaria*, of course, are of this first class. The slimy cord-like weeds, the Sea-Laces, belong to the second class.

The red sea-weeds are the most delicate. Some are shaped like the leaf of a tree, e.g., the oak-leaved *Delesseria*.

It is a far cry from sea-weeds to sea-birds, but we wish to have open eyes for everything at the seaside. The Common Gull, of course, we know, but do we always distinguish it from the Black-headed Gull?

The Shield-drake or Shell-drake is one of the duck family that stays with us all the year. Most of the ducks are only here in the winter.

The Common Guillemot can dive and swim very well. It may be seen at close quarters in the Brighton Aquarium. It is a very awkward bird on land, but graceful in the water. I have been told by sailors that the Guillemots know each of their eggs from the others by its markings. No two are ever found marked alike. The birds make no nest, but lay on a flat rock at some inaccessible height. The eggs are curiously tapered, so that when moved they spin round, but never roll off their resting-place. "It will be found that Guillemots occupy one station or line of ledges on the rocks, the Razor-bills another, the Puffins a third, Kittiwake Gulls a fourth, while the inaccessible pinnacles seem to be left for the use of the Herring Gulls."